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Programs for Gifted Children in the Elementary Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago

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PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

by

Sister Mary Norine Lynch, C.S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

Sister Mary Norine Lynch, C.S.J. was born in Chicago, Illinois, August 18, 1927.

She was graduated from Mercy High School, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1945, and from Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois, June, 1950, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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The writer previously has submitted no material for publication.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is much talk, time and money spent on education of the gifted and concern over the wastage of talent. House Bill 12, passed January 7, 1959, provided a \$2,500,000 program of grants to encourage and expand training of teachers for the education of the exceptional child, which includes the gifted child.¹ Congress also passed the National Defense Education Act in August, 1958, which authorized spending a billion dollars for a single purpose--that every young person, from the day he first enters school, should have an opportunity to develop his gifts to the fullest. This involves a dozen different programs. Under Title V, fifteen million dollars can be spent with the states matching federal dollars after the first year to support programs for secondary school students "to identify those with outstanding aptitudes and ability."² These bills certainly show great national interest in the subject of the gifted child.

¹U.S. Congress, Senate. Congressional Index: 86th Congress. 1959-1960. (Washington, D.C., 1959), 231.

²Theodore E. Carlson, Guide to the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Washington, 1959).

The gifted child is an asset and a responsibility. His potentialities for good are difficult to over-estimate. There is a feeling of urgency created by hearing that Russia is identifying its gifted children and educating them according to their potentialities, not just in science and mathematics, but also in languages

We are in a desperate race to see by what ideology our world will live by. We believe, and rightly, that freedom and democracy are the only answer for modern man. In our effort to banish serfdom and darkness from the world; in our effort to live in peace and prosperity with men everywhere, we need the best spiritual and creative leadership this country has to offer. We need diplomacy and brilliance to meet head-on the challenge of the twentieth century. We need the talent, imagination, and the resourcefulness that only the gifted can bring to the solution of our problems and to the making of a better world.³

In the past it was considered undemocratic for an educational system to give special attention to the gifted child. Today the trend seems to be that democratic education means the possibility of developing all one's talents to the best of one's ability, recognizing individual differences.

English and English defined the gifted child as "a child whose intelligence is in the upper two per cent of the total population of his age or a child having outstanding ability in any respect."⁴ Many terms are used for the gifted child, among them

³Paul Witty, Helping the Gifted Child, (Chicago, 1952), p. 47 48.

⁴Horace A. English and Ava Champney English, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms, (New York, 1958), p. 226.

are: gifted, superior, more able, above average, bright, talented, genius, high achiever, and rapid learner. Dr. James Conant coined the term "academically talented."

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the number of gifted children in the elementary schools of the archdiocese of Chicago, to ascertain how the gifted are identified and to determine the nature of the programs for the gifted in the elementary schools of the archdiocese of Chicago.

The limitations of this study are threefold: It is concerned with grammar school, which is one segment of the complete educational field from pre-school to graduate school. It is regional in that it deals with one city and further limited by dealing with one system in the city. The timing of the study, at the beginning of a movement, limits our knowledge of what is happening right now. We have no way of knowing what progress has been made in providing programs for the gifted since the survey was made.

Certain facets of the subject such as the intellectually gifted child rather than the artistically gifted had to be chosen for emphasis. Some of the other areas of interest that were not even touched upon in the questionnaire or thesis are: cost data for a program for the gifted child, philosophic readiness of a school for a program, social effects on the gifted child himself, prevention and correction of gifted children who are under-achievers, how many children would be missed if a single criterion for

identification were used, and how to educate a teacher for the gifted. These and many more are possible areas of research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

If it is accepted that educational provisions for the gifted have to be different from programs for the non-gifted, then the gifted child has to be identified. DeHaan and Wilson¹ stated that identification consists of screening and selection. They defined screening as the process by which all children of a group are tested or observed and then ranked according to ability, and selection as the determining of which children have the ability to be included in a specialized program. They further stated that while most schools have systematic screening programs, they have limited or no selection of the gifted.

Havighurst² recommended that schools should adopt both steps of identifying gifted children; that all children be

¹Robert F. DeHaan and Robert C. Wilson, "Identifying the Gifted," The Fifty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago, 1958), p. 166.

²Robert J. Havighurst, Eugene Stivers and Robert F. DeHaan, A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children (Chicago, 1955), p. 6.

screened and that selection be made on the basis of the data obtained.

Most authors, e.g., Gallagher, Witty, and Havighurst, agreed with DeHaan and Wilson that the general approaches to identification of gifted children are standardized tests and observation, with best results obtained from a maximum use of both.

Gallagher³ listed individual intelligence tests, group intelligence tests and achievement test batteries as methods commonly used for identifying gifted children in the classroom. He rated the individual intelligence test as the best method for this purpose, but recognized that they were expensive in the use of professional time and services and therefore, not practical as a general screening tool in schools with limited psychological services. He said the group intelligence test was generally good for screening, but limited in that it may not identify those children who had emotional or motivational problems. The disadvantage of achievement test batteries is that they will not identify underachieving children.

³James J. Gallagher, The Gifted Child in the Elementary School (February, 1959), p. 9.

Witty⁴ felt that intelligence tests were probably the most effective single instrument we have for measuring and selecting the child of high general intelligence but that it has limitations because it puts too much emphasis on verbal ability and its reliability depends on the way it is administered.

Out of the forty-five schools or school systems having programs surveyed by Havighurst⁵ thirty used group intelligence tests to identify gifted children; twenty-seven, achievement tests; eleven, individual intelligence tests; twenty-one, teacher recommendations; and five, parental approval. Aptitude tests, such as Kuder Preference Record, and projective techniques, such as Rorschach Ink Blot Test, were mentioned only once as means of identifying gifted children.

In a report to the Chicago Board of Education presented by Willis⁶ it was stated that most Chicago schools use a combination of the results of standardized intelligence and achievement tests, school marks, and teacher recommendation to identify gifted children.

⁴Paul Witty, Helping the Gifted Child (Chicago, 1952), p. 31.

⁵Havighurst, Stivers and DeHaan, pp. 34-95.

⁶Benjamin C. Willis, A Second Look at the Program of Education for the Gifted (Chicago, 1959), p. 4.

Graham,⁷ who is director of Education of Exceptional Children, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction of Illinois, listed teacher evaluation, cumulative records, classmate opinions, parent conferences, achievement tests, reading and vocabulary tests, group intelligence tests, sociometric measures, and interest and aptitude tests as some of the instruments most commonly used in identifying gifted children.

Other writers such as DeHaan and Wilson⁸ also gave an impressive list of tests available for use in identifying gifted children. However, in the literature there was no evidence that schools having programs for the gifted actually use such an elaborate system of identification as the last three authors mentioned suggested.

Personal observations of parents and teachers augment the information obtained from standardized tests in identifying gifted children. Almost every program using identifying procedures included teachers' observations. Most authorities in this field suggested that the teacher should be given some type of check list so she can be as objective as possible in identifying gifted children.

⁷Ray Graham, "Gifted Children," Education Press Bulletin (May, 1958), 3.

⁸DeHaan and Wilson, pp. 172-178.

Terman⁹ experienced more success in identifying gifted children by choosing the youngest child in the class. He found this to be a more accurate system of identifying gifted children than following the teacher's choice of who was gifted. Gallagher¹⁰ reported that the teacher probably will not pick out the gifted under-achiever who cannot use his resources. He observed that few gifted children are as educationally advanced as their ability warrants and if children are not challenged they develop poor study habits, making it difficult to identify giftedness.

Witty¹¹ felt that probably no one knows as much about a certain child as his parents. They will be able to tell if the child walked and talked early or learned to read before he went to school. Gifted children are likely to have parents who are gifted and are thus likely to have insight into the ability of their children.

Once the gifted children have been identified, the problem becomes one of acceleration versus enrichment, and enrichment in the regular classroom versus segregated enrichment.

⁹Louis M. Terman and Melita H. Oden, Genetic Studies of Genius, Vol. IV, The Gifted Child Grows Up (Stanford, 1947), pp.5-6.

¹⁰Gallagher, p. 8.

¹¹Witty, p. 28.

While the term acceleration is defined in various ways, any modification of a regular program can be considered acceleration if it enables the student to progress more rapidly and to complete a program in less time or at an earlier age than is normal.¹²

Passow¹³ mentioned that acceleration has ranged from early entrance to kindergarten through early graduation from college. Acceleration methods include: combining two years' work into one (three into two, eight into seven, etc.) either for a subject or a grade; skipping a course or a grade; taking extra courses for additional credit; attending summer sessions to shorten total time spent in school; permitting credit by examination; or allowing early admission to advanced levels.

Worcester¹⁴ favored early entrance to kindergarten as a way to keep the child interested right from the beginning. He advocated admitting children to school by testing rather than by chronological age. In his study in which no negative effects have been discerned, the child had been placed from the beginning with those

¹²D. A. Worcester, The Education of Children of Above-Average Mentality (Lincoln, 1956), p. 12.

¹³Harry Passow, "Enrichment of Education for the Gifted." Education for the Gifted, The Fifty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago, 1958), p. 212.

¹⁴Worcester, pp. 13-28.

more nearly his mental and social age and had developed better study habits. He cautioned that failure to accelerate involved certain dangers in that gifted children who were held back with those of their chronological age were more likely to develop behavior and personality problems than those who were accelerated. In conclusion he reported that laziness and careless work habits were observed more frequently among gifted children who had not been accelerated.

Gould¹⁵ reported that advanced placement has become more prevalent with each passing year. The students in the top intellectual groups get an enriched, stepped up program aimed at making them ready for college during their senior year of high school. If they passed advanced placement examinations in May, they were given academic credit or sophomore standing when they entered selected colleges. Last year, six thousand seniors from two hundred sixty-five secondary schools in the nation took these examinations. Almost all of the major colleges in the country cooperated with this program by accepting credit earned through these examinations.

¹⁵Gordon Gould, "Our Bright Kids Get a Break," Chicago Sunday Tribune Magazine, April 20, 1958, pp. 24-27.

Brother Cassian¹⁶ felt that covering four years in three was a simple device for challenging the gifted child. He considered entering college earlier to be a decided advantage. However, he cautioned that there must be adequate selection and guidance so that the young graduate will not be immature.

Terman¹⁷ said that it seemed that the schools were more opposed to acceleration now than they were thirty years ago. The lockstep seems to have become more and more the fashion, notwithstanding the fact that practically everyone who has investigated the subject is in favor of acceleration. He believed that gifted children should be promoted rapidly enough to permit college entrance at the age of seventeen, at latest, and that a majority of them would be better off to enter at sixteen.

Hildreth¹⁸ said that practically all the gifted children at Hunter College Elementary School are accelerated at least one year. Most educators such as Cutts and Moseley¹⁹ also favored acceleration if there had been sufficient preparation for it and they were against simply skipping a grade. Because it should

¹⁶Brother Cassian, "Educating Gifted Youth", Catholic School Journal, (December, 1955), p. 329.

¹⁷Terman and Oden, p. 281.

¹⁸Gertrude Hildreth, Education of the Gifted Child at Hunter College Elementary School (New York, 1952).

¹⁹Norma E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley, Teaching the Bright and Gifted (Englewood, Cliffs, 1957), pp. 109-112.

depend on the circumstances of each case, such as the parents' desires and the intellectual maturity of the child, they did not agree on the best time to accelerate the pupil.

Scheifele²⁰ who opposed acceleration asked the following question: "Does working at a higher grade level and mastering a more advanced content assure the full expression of the gifted child's powers?" In studying the characteristics and interests of gifted children she pointed out other needs, such as social and emotional maturity and health, which acceleration alone does not satisfy.

Enrichment, another one of the suggested solutions to the problem of helping the gifted child, is defined as giving the gifted child an opportunity to go deeper than the average child in his intellectual, social and artistic experiences.

Cassian²¹ believed that enrichment begins with the regular course of study as a springboard and that it can take place in a heterogeneous classroom. He cited that this procedure has the advantage of being easy for the administration to provide in that it does not involve extra teachers or rooms. The wide variety of

²⁰Marian Scheifele, The Gifted Child in the Regular Classroom, ed. Hollis L. Caswell (New York, 1953), p. 44.

²¹Cassian, p. 330.

learning materials and projects let the gifted child go at his own pace.

Dransfield²² thought that special classes are too costly to be generally possible, which is proven by the small number of children already provided for in this way.

Thissell²³ proposed a library, a science section, museum and work rooms as possible additions. She further suggested that the gifted child could catalog the class library, learn a foreign language, work at his hobby, write and produce plays, give reports, book reviews, work on the school paper, learn to speak effectively or write poetry. Happock²⁴ mentioned inviting speakers such as meteorologists or geologists to visit the classroom to interest and motivate gifted children. Barron²⁵ stated that if the school were well equipped, the gifted child could hear recorded materials with earphones, use a small screen viewer for a film strip, and make use of a micro-projector right in the ordinary classroom. He could use enrichment records that go along with

²²J. Edgar Dransfield, Administration of Enrichment to Superior Children in the Typical Classroom (New York, 1933), p. 5.

²³Bernice A. Thissell, "Enrichment in the Regular Classroom for a Rapid Learner", The Instructor, LXVII, (September, 1957), p. 68.

²⁴Anne S. Happock, "About Gifted Children; Everybody Says," XXXVII, National Elementary Principal.

²⁵J. Roy Barron, "Audio-Visual Aids and the Bright Child in the Regular Classroom," The Instructor, LXVII (January, 1958), pp. 71, 72.

certain books. His assignments, as well as tests and spelling words could be on tape. Finally, the capable student could record material for the entire class.

Greevey²⁶ thought that homogeneous grouping of gifted children provided them with the opportunity to express their own ideas more effectively. He pointed out that grouping was worthwhile in that it stimulated productivity by meeting other children of similar abilities. He reported that those against grouping say it is an unreal situation--not true to life. The gifted child will learn more slowly how to get along with all kinds of people. He will lose leadership opportunities and lower-ability children will lose the incentive given them by working with gifted children.

Strang²⁷ felt that a stimulating classroom brings out the best abilities of gifted children. The range of interests and useful skills should be increased and there should be more creative outlets. Subgrouping within the class requires reading, physical facilities and materials. She advocated the method of flexible subgrouping within a regular class as one of the best ways of meeting all the needs of all the pupils. She emphasized

²⁶William H. Greevey, "Gifted Children Need Motivation" Religious Education, LII (September, 1957) p. 365-370.

²⁷Ruth Strang, "How About Separate Classes for Gifted Children?" The Grade Teacher LXXV (November, 1957), p. 365.

various degrees of separation; once a week the children may have a library period where they report on a book they have read, they may have a period with a special teacher, they may spend half the day in a special class which is enriched rather than accelerated, or they may be in a special school. She considered partial segregation to be most desirable to obtain the advantages of grouping and the value of being with pupils of varied abilities and background.

Garrison²⁹ suggested certification for teachers of the gifted just as a special teacher for the handicapped has a special certificate. This certificate would require three years experience in teaching before it could be earned. Because of the emphasis on identifying gifted children as soon as possible, even at kindergarten age, all teachers must be aware of their problems. To attain this, he believed that a survey course of teaching the exceptional child should be a required course for all teachers.

Thomson²⁹ used these standards for the selection of teachers for the gifted in Winnipeg: several years experience, good standing in the community, adaptability to new situations, experience of having had an enriched program for bright children in her regular classroom.

²⁸Ivan K. Garrison, "Education of the Mentally Superior," Illinois Education XXI No. 2 (October, 1958).

²⁹Arthur D. Thomson, "Education of the Gifted in Winnipeg," Journal of Exceptional Children, XXIV (September, 1957), 2.

Abraham³⁰ said that actual giftedness of the teacher is not the major consideration. He felt that attitude and understanding plus a realization that help can come from the outside are more important. Newland³¹ and Peters and Farwell³² also agree that a good teacher for the gifted may not be different than any good teacher.

Brumbaugh³³ reported that the atmosphere that encourages teachers to experiment and to stimulate the growth of mentally superior pupils is more important than qualifications for teachers. He insisted that a broad cultural background, intellectual curiosity, patience and a sense of humor are more important than advanced degrees.

No treatment on literature related to the gifted child would be complete without a reference to Terman's study.³⁴ The Stanford study which began in 1921 was designed to discover the physical, mental and personality traits that are characteristic of the gifted child; also what kind of an adult the gifted child becomes.

³⁰Willard Abraham, Common Sense About Gifted Children (New York, 1958), p. 183.

³¹T. Ernest Newland, "Implications of Research in the Area of the Gifted," Exceptional Children, XXV (January, 1959), 197.

³²Herman J. Peters and Gail F. Farwell, ed., "The Teacher of the Superior Student," Research and Ideas in Guidance and Pupil Personnel Work IV No. 3 (Spring, 1958).

³³Florence N. Brumbaugh, "Intellectually Gifted Children," Special Education for the Exceptional Mental and Emotional Deviates and Special Problems (Boston, 1956), p. 7.

³⁴Terman and Oden.

A large unbiased sampling of subjects was needed so it would be true of any group of similar I.Q.'s living in the same culture. As much objectivity as possible was obtained. It was planned that the subjects be followed into adult life in order to check the constancy of childhood traits.

In order to be included in the group, an I.Q. of 140 was required on a Binet test and 135 for high school students on a Terman Group test. From a school population of about a quarter million, 1470 subjects were chosen. In 1936-37, and 1945, there was a follow-up, consisting of information blanks, sent to the subjects and parents. In 1927-28, 1939-40, and 1950-51 there was a field follow-up. The latest field follow-up involved retests of subjects and their spouses, Binet Tests of offspring, and collection of extensive case history data.

The most significant findings were:

1. The gifted child is superior, not only in intellectual but in practically all traits which were studied, including school achievement, versatility, character traits that were studied, play information, social adjustment, physique.
2. None of the adults regressed to average adult intelligence.
3. Seventy per cent graduated from college.
4. Adult success of the group, on the whole, has been outstanding.

Another important study which is frequently mentioned in the literature on the gifted child is Hollingworth's study of genius. Hollingworth³⁵ began her work with superior children in 1916. She held the view that general intelligence is the "power to achieve literacy and to deal with its abstract knowledge and symbols." She defined the gifted as the top centile but considered that arbitrary.

The minimum requirement for initial selection was an I.Q. (Stanford-Binet) of one hundred thirty or above. Other factors considered were social adaptability, emotional maturity and qualities of physical fitness.

In 1922 two special opportunity classes of twenty-six children each were formed. Group A had I.Q.'s of one hundred fifty and up; group B had I.Q.'s from one hundred thirty-four to one hundred fifty-four. Their ages were between $7\frac{1}{2}$ and $9\frac{1}{2}$ years. These classes in which the children were taught and studied lasted for a period of three years. In her observation it was discovered that the gifted children needed half the regular time to cover the usual studies, while the best needed only a fourth of the time. For the remainder of the day, enrichment such as French, algebra and history of civilization was provided.

³⁵Leta S. Hollingworth, Gifted Children (New York, 1929).

By using a control group of children who were similar in age and I.Q. but attended regular schools it was found that there was no appreciable difference in accomplishment in subject matter.

The second of Professor Hollingworth's experiments began in 1934. Median I.Q.'s of the fifty pupils varied from one hundred forty to one hundred forty-four. Age range was from 7-9½; grade placement was 1A - 6B.

Half a day was spent in prescribed elementary school subjects and half a day in enrichment activities, including French, science, work on units, music and art.

Her intensive longitudinal studies were of children testing one hundred eighty or above. In twenty-three years, Hollingworth located only twelve. (They appear once or twice in a million.) She considered them potential geniuses, but felt that time had to be given them to prove themselves. Early talking and reading clearly differentiated them, and they had difficulty adapting to school. Because she was aware of the loss to society which results from inept handling of superior children, she believed in early identification.

Much of what is being done today is based on Hollingworth's findings. Special full time classes for the gifted in regular schools can be found in New York City, New York, Birmingham, Alabama, Berkeley, California, Indianapolis, Indiana, Brockton,

Massachusetts, Allentown, Pennsylvania, and several other cities. Cleveland's major work classes which began more than thirty years ago are a typical example.

Norris³⁶ explained that any school that has a nucleus of gifted children and is accessible to public transportation may be a major work class center. Children may come from surrounding schools. Children were admitted if their I.Q. was one hundred twenty-five or more on an individual Binet test. They were usually outstanding in their work and were recommended by their teachers. Several grades were in one classroom, usually the first three grades in one room and the next three in another.

A five-minute daily talk gave each child the opportunity to learn to speak effectively. The class set up standards and evaluated according to these standards. Each child learned to take responsibility as he was a potential leader. He had to work with other groups of children, learn to collect his own materials and how to use the library. The method of class instruction most used was a socialized procedure, although no one method was used. Each child worked on a large project over a long period of time. The results were presented to the class in a twenty to thirty minute talk.

³⁶Dorothy Norris, "The Mentally Superior Child," Kent State University Bulletin XXXVIII (April, 1950), p. 10.

The know-how of finding information, giving talks, evaluating, experimenting, listening, interviewing, outlining, rather than facts was stressed. The child participated with the rest of the students for gym, music, craft and all other school activities. At the present time there are six hundred in elementary Major Work classes.

Because these children accomplished more than children in regular classes, they could branch out on an enriched program, but they did not go on to the work of the next grade. There was opportunity for special lessons in French, art, language, literature, typing, writing and producing plays, and reviewing books. Field trips, such as trips to museums, concerts, and industrial plants utilized the gifted children's full abilities.

Pregler³⁷ explained another well-known regional plan of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania which featured part-time ability grouping. It was believed that enrichment should take place throughout the entire education of the child. The gifted child not only thinks more quickly but differently, and this is provided for by segregation. The work was more thorough, deeper and greater in quantity, and traditional ways of teaching were minimized.

³⁷Hedwig Pregler, "Philosophy of the Education of the Mentally Superior Child," Kent State University Bulletin, XXXVIII (November, 1950).

The high-ability children were together in workshops for academic classes and in mixed-ability homerooms for other activities. To be eligible for workshop classes, the child had to have an I.Q. of 130 or more (Stanford-Binet). There were five workshops, one for each grade level except the first two. If their academic subjects were in the morning, then their special subjects, art, music etc., were in the afternoon. German and typing enriched the curriculum. They learned to do research, and by sixth grade spent a semester on a report. Critical thinking, oral and written communication were stressed.

Chandler³⁸ reported that the Hunter College Elementary School in New York City was another type of special school for gifted children, typical of many laboratory schools connected with colleges and universities. In 1941 it was reorganized so that research into problems regarding education of the gifted could be done. The enrollment was limited to 450 students ranging from nursery school to sixth grade. One had to have an I.Q. of at least 130 on the Binet test with social maturity and emotional stability taken into consideration. Special teachers were provided for music, art, French workshop. Audio-visual enrichment such as slides, films, photographs and recordings were used, and whenever possible, the study unit plan was used with emphasis placed on using community resources. A theme was chosen for the year which was integrated in art, language arts, music, citizenship and sciences. After the weekly meeting there was a follow-up by means of research, reports and stories.

³⁸Anna Curtis Chandler, "Audio-Visual Enrichment for Gifted Children," The Instructor, LXVII, (February, 1958), p. 75, 95.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The procedures presented in this chapter include the methods used in the compilation of the questionnaire, a description of how it was distributed and statistical treatment of the data obtained.

In order to compile the questionnaire, current books and articles in educational periodicals on the gifted child and giftedness were read. A five-day institute on program planning for the gifted child was attended at the University of Illinois. Lectures helped to point out problems in this field. What others are doing was learned by attending discussions with other teachers and administrators.

A rough draft of the questionnaire was drawn up. This was revised at conferences with members of the advisory board of this thesis. Two of the readers on the board who approved the outline for the thesis made suggestions that were incorporated into the questionnaire.

A brief description of the items included in the questionnaire follow: Item number one of the questionnaire (cf. Appendix I)

concerned itself with the number of children in the school. It was of interest to know, also, how many were girls and how many were boys, so this was specified in the questionnaire. Item number two asked for the number of gifted boys, gifted girls and total number of gifted children enrolled in the school. Once the number of gifted children was determined then item number three asked the means or techniques used to identify them. Item number four asked if special provisions for the gifted were available. If this answer happened to be in the affirmative a description of the program was requested in item number five. Item number six asked the principal if she would be willing to have her school visited so that her program could be seen in operation.

This approved questionnaire was mailed to the 410 Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago in February, 1959. A stamped self-addressed envelope was enclosed making it convenient for the recipient to reply.

The cover letter (cf. Appendix II), which accompanied the questionnaire stated that the purpose of the study was not to evaluate existing programs but to learn of their number and variety. Possibly if the principal thought her program would be evaluated she would not wish to fill out the questionnaire.

Within one month 202 replies or 49.2% were received in response to the first mailing. In April a second attempt was made by sending a follow-up letter (cf. Appendix III), which

contained the same questionnaire and another self-addressed stamped envelope. This resulted in an additional 108 replies which made a total of 75.9% of the schools.

A third try consisted in sending postal cards reminding the principals to answer the questionnaire as soon as possible so that the study would be complete. Nineteen additional responses to the questionnaire were received which made a total of 80.2% of the schools. Finally, there still remained eighty-one schools which had not replied. The majority of these were contacted by phone, a modified form of the questionnaire was used (cf. Appendix IV). Sixty-two of the schools were reached by phone, which gave a total of 391 replies out of 410 schools, or 95.4% of the schools of the Archdiocese.

Nine schools had programs for the gifted and checked that they would be willing to have someone visit the school to see the program in operation. An appointment for an interview with the principal was made the day before the school was visited. A check list (cf. Appendix V) was compiled to facilitate gathering data during the interview.

Each item on the questionnaire and all its aspects were put into the per cent of schools.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION

The responses to the questionnaires completed by the administrators of the Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago have been summarized in order to determine the status of the gifted children attending these schools.

Question one asked for the number of boys and girls enrolled in the schools. Of the 391 returned questionnaires, thirty-four were received on which this question was left unanswered. The total enrollment in the 357 schools which completed the forms was 233,758; of this number all but 33,085 were further broken down into sexes. These figures indicated that there were 101,896 boys and 98,777 girls in attendance at these schools.

Question 2.

How are the gifted children attending your school identified?

An examination of the responses received indicated that three methods were used to identify gifted children by the 192 schools who reported identifying their gifted children. Thirty-six schools or 18.7% reported using only mental ability tests, twenty-six schools or 13.5% used only achievement tests; and ten schools or 5.3% mentioned only using teachers' observations. One hundred

twenty schools or 62.5% used two or more of the above methods for identifying their gifted children.

Question 3.

How many gifted children are enrolled in your school?

A summary of the responses received follows: A total of 3,884 gifted children were reported, 1,559 boys and 1,840 girls; 485 of the total number were not separated into sexes. In the 192 schools which identified gifted children, 3.5% of the 111,675 children enrolled in these schools were classified as gifted.

Questions 4 and 5.

Are special provisions for the gifted available? If special provisions are available, please describe them.

Affirmative answers were received from forty-two schools and negative answers from 337 of them. The nature of the special provisions varied, included among them were methods of grouping, acceleration programs, enrichment in the regular classroom, enrichment in special classes, and various combinations of acceleration and enrichment.

Question 6.

Would you be willing to have me visit your school to see your program in operation?

Permission to visit schools to observe their programs was granted to the writer by thirty-three of the forty-two principals who reported having such programs.

The Chicago Archdiocesan school board's testing program specifies that the Stanford Achievement Test be given in the

spring to pupils of grades two through eight. Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Tests are given in the beginning of grades two, four and seven.

In visiting schools or in the replies on the questionnaire no evidence of any other tests being used was found. No mention was made of using individual tests.

All the elementary schools in the Archdiocese give semester tests which are based on the curriculum of the Archdiocese. These are given to all pupils in grades Four through eight. They are written and processed by Scholastic Testing Service. A sampling of tests is sent for analysis and a frequency distribution is made for each class in each subject. Percentile rankings, strengths and weaknesses based on answers to individual questions are published.

Whenever reference is made to achievement tests or mental ability tests in a school's program for the gifted the above tests are referred to.

The schools which had programs for the gifted and whose principals checked that they would be willing to have the writer see the program in operation were visited. A description of the program will follow:

Out of an enrollment of 1,100, the first school visited had ten boys and nineteen girls actually participating in a

program for their gifted children. The techniques used by this institution for identifying the gifted children were:

1. Classroom performance and consistent work above grade level.
2. Achievement tests
3. Mental Ability Tests
4. Emotional stability and maturity.

Because of the high rankings on achievement tests by the student, the Community Supervisor suggested an acceleration program, although pupils were never accelerated without the consent of their parents. Last year a group of sixth-grade children whose achievement was two years above the average was given special classes in arithmetic and social studies during the second semester. In September they entered school as eighth graders, and at the time this school was visited they were in the upper third of the class. This year, the gifted children of fifth grade who were being accelerated were in a combination fifth and sixth grade room. Since second semester they were all taking sixth grade classes with additional work in fifth grade arithmetic and social studies. A second grade group was doing third grade reading and numbers and will be promoted to grade four in June.

A child will not be accelerated more than once and no one is accelerated without preparation beforehand. The child's

progress was carefully watched afterwards by means of profile graphs and cumulative records. The faculty was not sure which time is best to accelerate the child. The achievement results of the children who had been accelerated seemed to justify the program.

The second school visited had an enrollment of 701 pupils (about 80% colored) and three pupils with an I.Q. over 125. Mental Ability tests, achievement tests and teacher evaluation were used to select a group of twelve fifth and sixth graders for an enriched program. French lessons were provided because a retired Sister who had taught high school French was available. The oral (rote) conversation method was used. The children had no text book, but used a composition book to copy items that had to be memorized. Sister and the children were very enthusiastic, glad of a chance to perform. The children were called on to recite the days of the week, count, answer set questions, etc.

Belonging to the class seemed to carry with it an amount of prestige, especially as the child had to keep his conduct marks and other grades above 90. The class began at recess and continued for another fifteen minutes, so a minimum of regular school work was missed. Plans were being made to continue lessons with these children and to start a new group in fifth grade next year.

The third school visited had an enrollment of 1,550 and listed 90 boys and 110 girls as gifted, which were identified by mental ability tests and achievement tests. The program for these children was largely in eighth grade where departmental work was done. The students were sectioned according to mental ability tests, and ability for social studies, arithmetic, English and reading. In social studies, extra readings were required, such as biography and other history texts. In mathematics, the gifted student had an opportunity to accomplish the fundamentals of algebra. In reading, the more advanced group read adult fiction, biography and classics. Some of their readings included Gulliver's Travels, Lost Horizon, The Masterful Monk, Oliver Twist, Shadow of the Earth, Twelfth Night, etc. Many of these children will be enrolled in honors classes in high school, so the acceleration and enrichment will be continued.

In the other grades, enrichment was provided for the better student by the classroom teacher.

The fourth school visited only went to fifth grade thus far; a new grade will be opened each year. Out of 422 children, 55 boys and 70 girls were listed as gifted. They were identified by mental ability, achievement, weekly and monthly tests and group discussions.

Seatwork has been compiled by the school supervisor as an incentive for gifted pupils. This work started in the first

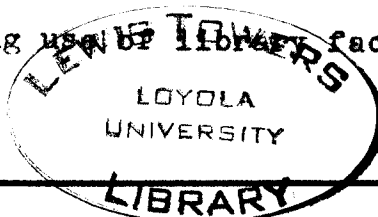
grade and followed the students through all the grades. Phonics, reading, English, arithmetic, writing, geography and history were included. This seatwork had more work than the ordinary child can do. Certain numbers were considered challenge questions and only the bright ones were expected to do them. The system looked very constructive and well worked out.

There was a panel discussion on Alaska versus Hawaii in fifth grade held by some gifted children. There seemed to be a great deal of intramural competition because of contests and publishing results of tests. A selected group of children directed the school paper. Much emphasis was placed on group discussion and having gifted children as group leaders.

The fifth school visited had an enrollment of 482 pupils, of which 20 boys and 22 girls were listed as gifted. Mental ability tests, achievement tests and observation are the techniques used to identify the gifted children.

French classes were given after school for those who wished to study a foreign language. Once a week a group of pupils went to one of the public schools where a science instructor held classes. The parents paid a fee for each of these services.

Other opportunities for enrichment were: writing for the school paper, belonging to a school orchestra, the archdiocesan reading program, and making use of library facilities. There



was emphasis in all the grades, beginning with first, to help the gifted child achieve his potential. Bright children were encouraged to help slower children, lead discussions, etc.

The sixth school visited classified 30 children as gifted out of an enrollment of 667. Because of overflow classes, it was decided to put the best pupils in a double grade room for grades four and five, and for grades six and seven. These factors were taken into consideration in selecting the group: reading above grade level, mental ability, arithmetic achievement, lack of nervousness and ability to follow directions. Children who were working beyond their expectancy were excluded.

Outstanding teachers were chosen for these two rooms. A foreign language was being planned for the future and there was much emphasis on research work and projects. Science Research Associates Individualized Reading Plan and the Archdiocesan Reading Program were being used to help children read at their own level. Teacher aides take part of the class for spelling and individual work. The school had an excellent library and full-time librarian.

The results on the achievement tests of these two groups were very good. The point was made that even after taking the best students out of the ordinary classes, there was still leadership and good work done in the other classes.

The program of the seventh school visited was set in motion by the pastor. Out of 1,130 students, approximately 800 are accelerated because third and fourth grade work was done in one year. A combination of third grade texts and fourth grade workbooks was used, because of the financial problem of purchasing a double set of texts in one year. No history is taught except in seventh and eighth grades. There were three divisions of each grade. The children in two rooms took seven years to finish grammar school; the children in the other room take eight years. Therefore, everyone was not pushed ahead. The faculty decided, with the help of mental ability tests and achievement tests, without consulting the parents, and their decision was final. The great majority of the graduates went to their own parish high school where they made up the largest percentage of the 150 freshmen; thus the problem of adjusting with older students was eliminated.

In the eighth school visited, out of 1,101 pupils, 53 boys and 86 girls were listed as gifted. They were identified by general aptitude, which was subdivided as

- a. daily recitation--related thinking,
- b. written work--composition,
- c. reading comprehension, interpretation, abstraction

and mental ability tests.

In the sixth grade the better students chosen by the above standards were in a separate group. The enrichment included making reports, painting murals, writing, directing and presenting plays. This was directed by a retired Sister who worked with them for some time each day. A scattergram of the achievements of the sixth grade group was hitting the top of the scale made out for that level by Stanford Tests.

Fourth grade was working on maximum reading achievements through use of Science Research Associates Individualized Reading Program. Fifth grade had departmentalization of subject matter by the two teachers, one group more advanced than the other.

Although the ninth school visited had 30 children classified as gifted out of an enrollment of 650, all the children take part in an enriched program. The gifted children are identified by means of achievement tests, mental ability tests, and teacher observations. This school was set up as an experimental school because of its size, location, pastor and nearness to the community college.

The teachers in this school were specially trained over a period of time. The program was directed by the nearby college, giving the grammar school the advantage of the experiments, studies and thinking done at the college.

The faculty was enthusiastic about the plan or they would not have been placed there. There was an emphasis on liberal education in the teachers' preparation and teaching with the Bible as the core subject.

Grades were called levels and a child might finish in six years. The program was beginning its fifth year so no one has actually finished in that time yet.

There was much flexibility and cooperation among teachers. A first level gifted child who had been passed on to the second level could come back to the first level for phonics. Textbooks in history were being rewritten to fit in with the plan.

Every effort was made to have a typical school. The classes were quite large and they had several lay teachers. Because of the suburban neighborhood, the number of professional people willing to help would not be available in all cases.

The teacher-aide system was highly organized. Suitable women, not necessarily professionals, were asked to be teacher aides. They spent a morning or afternoon a week. In this way each primary grade had ten teacher aides. They did not come into the classrooms. A table with chairs and a screen was set up in the corridor outside the classroom. A manual had been prepared for this purpose by a committee of teachers which gave clear directions, even telling the aide what to say.

Starting with first grade there was an individual check by the teacher aide on everything that was taught. Colors, counting, alphabet, etc., in fact, everything was checked and a record was kept. If the child did not know the material, the aide could help him or refer him to the teacher. He worked at it until he mastered the material and then would go up to the next section. One child left the room at a time. When he had finished, he went back and tapped the next child who then went out. The aide always had a set of papers to correct in case the teacher was presenting something and wanted all the pupils in the room.

French was taught to all the pupils from first to sixth grade. The teacher had taught French in a primary school in Paris, so she knew how to teach small children. In seventh and eighth grades, Spanish was taught by a professional teacher who has had experience with the Berlitz School of Languages.

The great majority of schools visited selected their gifted children for their programs by means of mental ability tests, achievement tests and teacher observations. Yet their actual programs for the gifted children had great diversity. Three schools had accelerated programs, but they were all organized differently. The rest of the schools visited used different types of enrichment by various means such as retired teachers or departmentalization.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was undertaken to determine the number of gifted children in the elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago, to ascertain how the gifted are identified, and to determine the nature of the programs for the gifted in the elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. In order to obtain this information, it was decided to send a questionnaire to the 410 Catholic Elementary Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Responses were obtained from 391 or 95.4% of the schools. Nine schools which had programs for their gifted were visited by the writer.

From the answers given on the questionnaire, it can be concluded that some Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago were very aware of the problem of challenging the gifted child, while the majority of the schools were doing very little, if anything. One of the reasons some of the schools were doing little for the gifted child, is that they were focusing their attention on other areas of importance such as the slow child, or the foreign child with a language difficulty. Another reason, may

be that it is up to the individual principal to formulate a program for the gifted child, as there is no general directive from the school board. The methods and ideas of the few schools in the Archdiocese who do have a program for their gifted children could be used for other schools as a pattern of activities and procedures. They utilized some of the best techniques for challenging the gifted, such as; preparing the child for acceleration, using talented parents and professional personnel for working with gifted children, and providing special classes with special teachers.

Certainly the first and most essential step in caring for the gifted child and every child is homogeneous grouping. Homogeneous grouping as used by this writer means dividing the children of a grade into classes according to ability based on the child's achievement tests, intelligence quotient and teacher evaluation. These children may be further sub-grouped within the room. The advantage of this method is that no extra facilities or faculty are needed. If the school is large enough this can be done by rooms. Otherwise subgrouping within the room is necessary. This lessens the large range of ability that exists in every classroom and helps the teacher reach the child on his own level.

Probably the main conclusion from this study is that there

is no one program for the gifted child that is either most desirable or most successful. Actually many programs of various kinds have proved successful. Each district, parish or town, as the case may be, must work out the program most suitable for its own situation. No school can take another's program and use it in entirety without adapting it in some way. Most of the programs that are successful have been carefully planned and evaluated over a period of time.

In two of the schools visited, a retired Sister was available for classes with bright children. Possibly this is an area in Catholic schools which has not been explored enough. There are always Sisters too old to take full class responsibility but who could take a group for a period each day. These Sisters are fully qualified and mentally alert. It would help the Sister feel more secure by contributing something to the school. It would take the responsibility from the busy classroom teacher and it would help the gifted child by challenging and guiding him to achieve more and broaden his knowledge, yet give him the advantage of being in a regular classroom.

Two recommendations to help the schools become more aware of the necessity of caring for the gifted child were already

suggested, namely: a directive from the school board and full use of retired Sisters. In the absence of additional faculty members, another possibility, although not ideal, is for the principal to take a gifted group at different levels once a week. Guided research projects, science experiments, and oral talks would be practical because the child could work on these in between the special classes. The special classes would give the incentive and direction to the projects.

Another suggestion would be to centralize classes for the gifted child either at the Archdiocesan or Community level. This could be done in a centrally located building as is commonly done in Cleveland. There should be not only enriched study resources but teachers of superior ability available to teach these children. In many cases the Religious order doesn't have enough schools in close radius to make transportation possible for the students. It would seem that this could be done more easily on an Archdiocesan level.

On either the Community level or Archdiocesan level, consultants or resource personnel are necessary. If care for the gifted child is left to the individual teacher, she should have help as to procedure, materials available, etc. She should

certainly be aware of the gifted child, his problems and his potentialities. Some individualized instruction will be necessary, not more of the same kind of work. She will have to understand what enrichment means. The teacher should be given in-service training. More universities should make courses on the gifted child available at both graduate and under-graduate levels.

The teacher, principal, school, Community and archdiocese should have a philosophy of the gifted child. Certain policies in identifying and selecting the gifted child should be laid down. The plan should start at the beginning of a child's education and continue through Junior High and Senior High. Elementary and High schools have to work together. The underlying philosophy is the higher one wants the children to go, the broader the base which is needed. Many programs have failed because of insufficient groundwork. There has to be a total perception. There has to be serious consideration of the goals and the means of attaining them. Even fifth grade is too late to begin. Habits of laziness and indifference are too hard to unlearn. By this time the child may have some attitudes toward studying that cannot be changed.

If archdiocesan or community centralized rooms for the gifted, special teachers and consultants seem too idealistic--too much to strive for--remember that unless one aims high, one

will not accomplish anything.

Some recommendations for further study are: relative advantages of acceleration versus enrichment, means of in-service training, when is the best time to accelerate a student, how best to prepare a faculty, the gifted children themselves, their parents, the parents of non-gifted children for a program for the gifted child.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME OF SCHOOL (For clerical purposes only): _____

1. Number of pupils enrolled in school.

_____ boys _____ girls _____ total.

2. How many gifted children are enrolled in your school?

_____ boys _____ girls _____ total.

3. List below the means or techniques which are used for identifying the gifted children attending your school:

4. Are special provisions for the gifted available at your school?

_____ Yes _____ No (check one)

5. If special provisions are available, please describe them on the reverse side of this sheet, or enclose any available printed matter describing your program.

6. Would you be willing to have me visit your school to see your program in operation?

_____ Yes _____ No (check one)

_____ Please check if you are interested in receiving a written report of the results of this study.

APPENDIX II

COVER LETTER

Dear Sisters:

In my graduate work toward a Master's degree at Loyola University I am required to write a thesis. I plan to conduct a survey of the programs for gifted children attending the Archdiocesan elementary schools. May I impose on a few minutes of your time to answer the short questionnaire which is attached to this letter?

The purpose of this study is not to evaluate existing programs, but rather to learn of their number and variety. The data submitted will not be identified as to original source in any report of this study. All information received will be treated collectively and held in the strictest confidence.

Please return the questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your assistance. God bless you in your work, Sister.

Sincerely in Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

APPENDIX III

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Dear Sister,

Possibly you have misplaced my letter of February 2, 1959 asking you to fill out a questionnaire regarding the gifted children in your school.

I know you are busy, but I am sending another questionnaire hoping that you would be so kind as to take a few minutes to fill it out and return it.

Even if you do not have a program for gifted in your school, your reply is important for the completeness of this study.

God bless you in your work, Sister.

Sincerely in Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

APPENDIX IV

MODIFIED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR USE ON PHONE

1. Would you please give me the approximate enrollment in your school?
2. What is the number of gifted children in your school?
3. What provisions are made for these gifted children in your school at the present time?

APPENDIX V

CHECK LIST FOR INTERVIEWS

MEANS OR TECHNIQUES OF IDENTIFICATION:

TESTS:

<input type="checkbox"/> Stanford	<input type="checkbox"/> California
<input type="checkbox"/> Binet	<input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan
<input type="checkbox"/> Iowa Silent Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Otis
<input type="checkbox"/> Kuhlmann Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/> California Mental
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maturity
<input type="checkbox"/> Others _____	

☐ Consistent work above grade level

☐ Parental interest

☐ Stability, maturity

☐ Leadership, (qualities)

SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

☐ French Classroom teacher ☐ Special teacher ☐

☐ Spanish

☐ Reading enrichment

☐ Planned Seat Work

☐ School paper

☐ Research work and projects

☐ Reading program (Arch-
diocesan)

☐ Murals

☐ Writing, directing and
presenting plays

☐ Student Aides

☐ S.R.A. Reading program

☐ Others _____

OTHER METHODS:

- _____ Double promotion
- _____ Acceleration
- _____ Non-graded school
- _____ Departmental work
- _____ Teacher aids

General reaction to the program:

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Norine Lynch, C.S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Education.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 31, 1960

Date

Henry R. Malecki, Ph.D.
Signature of Adviser